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U. S. Department of Agriculture

The third of a series of ten talks by Welby R. Stevens, assistant forecaster, United States Weather Bureau, broadcast through Station WRC and 32 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Monday, January 6, 1930 at 1:10 p. m. Eastern Standard Time.

On last Thursday we explained how weather observations are made. Today we shall tell how the observations are assembled, which is the next stage in the development of a weather forecast.

In order to save expense and time the observations are sent in a coded message which an experienced man can decipher as easily as he can read the English language. For example, a message may read like this---- Evansville benefit menial beads cognomens---- which means that the atmosphere pressure at Evansville, Indiana, at the time of observation was 30.14 inches, temperature 64 degrees, highest temperature during the day 66 degrees, the wind was 14 miles per hour from the south, a trace of rain fell during the day, and the sky was covered with strato-cumulus clouds moving rapidly from the southwest.

After the observers at the various stations have enciphered their observations, they file them with the telegraph office which is usually nearby. In some cities there is a special wire to the Weather Bureau Office. The telegraph company immediately sends the messages either to Chicago or New York. These cities are known as the distributing centers. The messages after they arrive at the centers are delivered to a special distributing section in the operating room. Separate blanks are prepared in advance by the telegraph company for each station to which a report is delivered. For example, the Abilene, Texas report goes to 140 stations. Consequently, there are 140 blanks for this report. As soon as the reports are received, they are passed together with the blanks to duplicators, who make a stencil of the coded words and print them on the blanks. Messengers immediately rush the blanks to the operators of the wires connecting the telegraph center with the points of destination. Within 6 minutes of the time a report is received at the center the necessary duplications have been made and the message has been dispatched to all the points of destination. Ten or more duplicators and a group of sorters and messengers are trained for and exclusively engaged on the work. The reports arrive at all of their destinations within an hour after the observer delivers the message to the telegraph office. This speed would be impossible without the splendid cooperation of the telegraph company, and it is to be congratulated on the excellent system that has been developed for transmitting weather reports with the utmost dispatch.

As speed is such an important factor in all the elements that contribute to the production and use of weather forecasts, every effort is devoted to expeditiousness in charting reports and issuing and disseminating the forecasts and warnings in order that they may be of maximum value to the public. On next Thursday we shall tell how this is accomplished.

